DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 449 460 CG 030 727

AUTHOR Broughton, Elizabeth
TITLE Counseling and Support Services for College Student Athletes.
PUB DATE 2001-01-00
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American College Personnel Association (Boston, MA, March 3-7, 2001).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Academic Advising; *Athletes; College Athletics; *College Students; Counseling; Higher Education; Holistic Approach; Integrated Services; Program Development; *Psychoeducational Methods; *Student Needs
IDENTIFIERS University of Florida

ABSTRACT

A comprehensive counseling program with support services is an essential factor for meeting academic and personal needs of college student athletes. Due to the demands and challenges placed on college athletes, 10% require serious counseling. There are six identified demands or challenges confronting student athletes: (1) balancing academic and athletic endeavors; (2) socialization actions; (3) athletic success; (4) physical health; (5) multiple relationships; and (6) dealing with termination of an athletic career. A program was established at the University of Florida with psychoeducational, life-skills, and emotional well being components. It is based on a developmental model and holistic approach. To support student athletes in their success in academics, personal development, and athletic endeavors the following components need to be considered: academic advising; life-skills development; clinical counseling; and contributions of performance enhancement efforts. This comprehensive approach can benefit both the student athletes and institutions of higher learning. (Contains 17 references.) (JDM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 449 460

Counseling and Support Services for College Student Athletes

Elizabeth Broughton, Ed.D.

Eastern Michigan University

Presented at

American College Personnel Association

March 3, 2001

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY:

E. BROUGHTON

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CG030727

College student athletes are a special and unique student culture requiring support for their academic, personal, and athletic needs and issues. To support student athletes, a comprehensive counseling program with support services is an essential factor for their success.

Institutions of higher education support athletic programs for significant financial and social benefits received from participating in intercollegiate sports. Far too long, however, institutions have not provided significant financial or staff support to assist student athletes. Clearly, institutions do not relish the significant negative publicity, problems, and controversies generated by some college student athletes. Nevertheless, when the emphasis is placed on holistic student development, both the institution and college student athlete can significantly benefit.

College student athletes contribute immensely to the richness of a campus environment. Athletes contribute to an institution by enhancing school spirit and pride, involving students, alumni, and community in a centralized effort, receiving national recognition for the institution, increasing alumni support and business involvement, and no less important, attracting new students. A well planned counseling and support services program provides an environment to assist athletes academic, athletic, and personal achievements. Many college student athletes attend college with fundamentally similar academic, emotional, and personal issues as the general college student (Ferrante & Etzel, 1991). For both, these range from typical adolescent developmental issues to more serious psychological issues as addictive behaviors (gambling, drinking and eating disorders), depression, and infrequently, suicidal tendencies. But unlike the general college student, student athletes face an additional complex set of demands, stresses, and

challenges arising from their involvement in a competitive sport. These demands, stresses, and challenges include many personal, academic, and athletic issues.

Due to these demands and challenges, approximately, ten percent of American college student athletes require serious counseling (Hinkle, 1994). Several studies indicated that student athletes struggle with personal issues, academic pressures, and social adjustments (Ferrante & Etzel, 1991; Parham, 1993; Pinkerton, Hinz, & Barrow, 1989). Parham (1993) identified six demands or challenges confronting college student athletes: (a) balancing athletic and academic endeavors; (b) balancing social activities with the isolation from athletic pursuits; (c) balancing athletic success or lack of success; (d) balancing one's physical heath and injuries; (e) balancing several relationships including coaches, parents, family, and friends; and (f) dealing with the termination of an athletic collegiate career.

The early athletic advisor's role is described as one who worked with student athletes in orientation and study halls and, in addition when needed, provided psychological services (Harley & Cunningham, 1984). It is clear, however, that providing only academic advising for the student athlete does not sufficiently meet the needs of the student athletes. Hinkle (1994) suggested that the responsibilities should include educational, developmental, and remedial programs. Furthermore, he stated that professionals generally prefer to provide counseling, performance enhancement, and assistance during transitional periods (for example, orientation, lack of athletic success, not making the first team, severe injury, termination of athletic career) and concentrate on personal and career counseling. Counseling professionals are trained to assess for many issues that student athletes face, and provide appropriate counseling, whether it is developmental or clinical in nature.

Therefore, a practical approach to categorize counseling and support services for college student athletes is to classify them into four areas: academic advising, life skills, clinical counseling, and performance enhancement. Academic advising is the most popular and traditional approach that is consistently supported within athletic associations. The more established programs have acknowledged and accepted the responsibility for providing more extensive assistance to the student athlete in regards to providing an environment in which appropriately trained life skills, clinical, and performance enhancement practitioners are available for individual and group consultation.

The psychoeducational life skills approach, which follows a developmental model, is another category of counseling and supporting student athletes. A life skills program focuses on personal, practical, and emotional developmental issues such as drug and alcohol education, interpersonal communication skills training, time management, career development/selection, and appropriate sexual relationships. Life skills training is often taught as an academic course or a series of workshops, and is intended to assist the student athletes with issues they will confront during their college years and beyond. The NCAA adopted a life skills program in the early 1990's. It is based on the concept that student athletes are multi-faceted people who need to be taught life skills and supported so that they become functional members of society after graduation.

In 1981, an early effort focusing on psychoeducational life skills and assisting student athletes with their emotional and psychological well-being was developed at the University of Florida. A first year seminar was developed that taught the student athletes life skills (Wittmer, Bostic, Phillips, & Waters 1981). During their senior years at the University of Florida, student athletes could participate in a senior exit seminar that would assist them with job related matters.

Petitpas and Champagne (1988) expanded the psychoeducational approach from the first year student athlete until graduation. They proposed a developmental model utilizing Perry's cognitive developmental approach. They adapted programming aspects for each academic year based on Perry's theory. Similarly, Roper and McKenzie (1988) proposed an extensive four-year program for African American college student athletes based on Heath's theory of maturity. These authors described in detail activities involved in Heath's model for athletic counselors to use with African American student athletes at predominately White institutions. More recently, Danish, Petitpas, and Hale (1993) expanded the psycho-educational approach to include life development intervention (LDI), which promotes human development throughout the life span emphasizing continual growth and change. This model provides detailed approaches for working with student athletes. The multiplication of these various approaches and programs indicate a need exists for supporting student athletes in a variety of ways regarding their academic, personal, and athletic growth and development during their college tenure.

In regards to specific clinical counseling approaches, Pinkerton et al. (1989) provided specific counseling interventions for college student athletes. These authors summarized several factors that contribute to personal and psychological problems of college student athletes. These problem issues included identity conflict, fear of success/failure, social isolation, poor athletic performance, academic problems, drug/alcohol problems, career-related concerns, interpersonal relationships, and athletic injuries. These authors stated that many of the counseling interventions are not unique for student athletes, as most college-age students struggle with some of these issues. However, the student athlete may be reluctant to use established campus counseling services. The reasons for their reluctance to seek out assistance from the counseling center, according to Ferrante and Etzel (1991), include: (a) the high-visibility of the student

athlete on campus may preclude assurance of confidentiality or privacy; (b) time limitations because of academic schedules and practice/competition times; (c) such myths as athletic environments are "closed environments," and already provide the student athlete with what they need internally within the organization; (d) the perception that student athletes are perceived as "weak" or "crazy" if they seek counseling; and (e) personnel within the counseling centers are not specifically trained in athletic issues. Pinkerton et al. (1989) highlighted several counseling interventions, such as solutions-focused therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and career counseling, as the most important intervention techniques for use with student athletes. Additionally, Howard-Hamilton (1993) identified specific social cognitive intervention approaches for use with African American female athletes in overcoming obstacles during and after their collegiate career. She proposed active mentoring, reflective journal writing, monthly workshops, and role modeling activities to assist African American female athletes adjust to collegiate athletic life and transitioning after college. Recently, Fitch and Robinson (1998) designed a specific 12-week intervention program for college male and female basketball players. This is a structured intervention program designed for small teams and includes such components as educational seminars, group counseling, and individual counseling.

Sports psychology, or performance enhancement, is a relatively new method of assisting student athletes to achieve top performance. This can be accomplished on a group or individual basis, and often covers such topics as goal setting, visualization, energy management, attention control, game-preparation strategies, and post-performance analysis. The mental side of the game continues to receive increased attention as athletes continue to push the envelope from a physical perspective. It is becoming clearer that athletes that achieve success are the ones with

not only the best physical skills, but also exhibit psychological skills that help them to their fullest potential.

The profession of counseling and support services for student athletes is still a relatively new and growing profession. Many of these proposed models lacked sufficient evaluation. Several approaches (Fitch & Robinson, 1998; Petitipas & Champagne, 1988) involved well-organized methods for evaluating their proposed models, but little research indicated that these methods actually assisted student athletes. To grow as a profession, the athletic advisor or counselor needs to be trained properly in the field of advising or counseling, and develop capabilities for evaluating their programs.

Many issues must be considered when developing an adequate support program for student athletes. A developmental model is a useful foundation from which to build a program. Developmental models such as Chickering's (1969) psychosocial model offer valuable information about issues that might challenge student athletes during their athletic tenure, and after they graduate. Chickering and Reisser (1993) proposed that college students must successful master developmental tasks such as, developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Along with these developmental tasks, student athletes are also faced with additional challenges such as academic eligibility, injury management, the demands of training and competition, eating disorders, self-esteem problems, career development concerns, retirement from sports (either through force or choice) and substance abuse problems. While some of the challenges presented are not unique to the student athlete population, they are unique when put within the context of

the student athlete identity and environment. Therefore, a "model" program provides a developmental and holistic approach to assisting college student athletes is necessary.

In summary, it is recommended that athletic programs consider reviewing and revising their approach to counseling and support programs. To support the student athletes in their success in academics, personal development, and athletic endeavors, it is important to consider the components of academic advising, life skills development, clinical counseling, and the contributions of performance enhancement efforts.

Working with college student athletes can be very professional rewarding. However, student affairs practitioners who work with athletes in advising and counseling capacities are encouraged to attend to the significant academic, personal, and athletic needs and issues of student athletes. Much work can be initiated to enhance the student experience of college student athletes. With careful planning and development while focusing on the comprehensive components of academic advising, life skills development, clinical counseling, and performance enhancement techniques, the student athlete and the institution can benefit immensely.

References

Chickering, A. W. (1969). Education and Identity. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chickering, A.W. and Reisser, L. (1993). Education and Identity (2 ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Danish, S.J., Petitpas, A.J., & Hale, B. (1993). "Life Development Intervention for Athletes: Life Skills Through Sports." The Counseling Psychologist, 21, 352-353.

Ferrante, A.P., & Etzel, E. (1991). "Counseling College Student athletes: The Problem, the Need." In E. F. Etzel, A. P. Ferrante, and J. W. Pinckney, (eds.), Counseling College Student Athletes: Issues and Interventions. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.

Finch, T.J., & Robinson, C.R. (1998). "Counseling and Interventions with College Athletes: A Proposed Model." Journal of College Studen: Development, 39 (6), 623-627.

Hinkle, J. S. (1994). Sports Counseling: Helping Student athletes. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ED 379 532).

Howard-Hamilton, M. (1993). "African-American Female Athletes: Issues, Implications, and Imperatives for Educators." NASPA Journal, 30(2), 153- 159.

Hurley, R., & Cunningham, R. (1984). "Providing Academic and Psychological Services for the College Athlete." In A. Shriberg and F. R. Brodzinski (eds). Rethinking Student Services for College Athletes, New Directions for Student Services, no. 28.

Lanning, W. (1982). "The Privileged Few: Special Counseling Needs for Athletes. Journal of Sport Psychology, 4, 19-23.

Miller, G. M., & Wooten, H. R. (1995). "Sports Counseling: A New Counseling Specialty Area." Journal of Counseling and Development, 74, 172-173.

Nelson, E. S. (1983). "How the Myth of the Dumb Jock Becomes Fact: A Developmental View for Counselors." Counseling and Values, 27, 176-185.

Parham, W. D. (1993). "The Intercollegiate Athlete: A 1990 Profile." The Counseling Psychologist, 21 (3), 411-429.

Petitpas, A., & Champagne, D. E. (1988). "Developmental Programming for Intercollegiate Athletes." Journal of College Student Development, 29, 454-460.

Petitpas, A.J., Buntrock, C. L., Van Raalte, J.L., & Brewer, B. W. (1995). "Counseling Athletes: A New Specialty in Counselor Education." Counselor Education and Supervision, 34, 214-219.

Pinkerton, R., Hinz, L., & Barrow, J. (1989). "The College Student athlete: Psychological Considerations and Interventions." Journal of American Health, 37, 218-226.

Roper, L.D., & McKenzie, A. "Academic Advising: A Developmental Model for Black Student athletes." NASPA Journal, 26, 91-98.

Wittmer, J., Bostic, D., Phillips, T. D., & Waters, W. (1981). "The Personal, Academic, and Career Problems of College Student Athletes: Some Possible Answers." Personnel and Guidance Journal, 60, 52-55.

Elizabeth Broughton is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the College Student Affairs Program in the Department of Leadership and Counseling at Eastern Michigan University. She was a collegiate tennis player and coach